DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 354 495 CS 011 202

AUTHOR Embry, Julia E.
TITLE Staff Development for Selecting Appropriate Text for At-Risk Readers in the Primary School Program.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 58p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Afterschool Programs; Elementary School Students; *Faculty Development; *High Risk Students; *Inservice Teacher Education; Primary Education; Reading Achievement; *Reading Material Selection; Staff Development; Student Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS Text Factors

ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to devise a system of literacy instruction to train teachers to select appropriate text for at-risk students by an authentic assessment of the 'running record' as a starting point for meeting the literacy needs of each individual student. (The 'running record' is a written record of the student's reading as observed and recorded by the teacher.) The system was constructed in a staff development inservice which involved a period of 15 weeks. Inservice training sessions on the running record were developed; pre- and post-questionnaires and the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile were administered to the teachers; pre- and post-running records and writing samples of the at-risk students were administered; demonstration literacy lessons were prepared for the teachers; and teachers were assisted in selecting appropriate text for at-risk students. Analysis of the data revealed that after the inservice training on the running record and early literacy sessions, the teachers were able to select appropriate text for the at-risk student. The key factor in the accomplishment of the practicum was the literacy inservice training sessions attended by the teachers. (Three tables of data are included; 38 references, the pre- and post-assessment teacher interview, and a sample running record are attached.) (Author/RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED354495

Staff Development for Selecting Appropriate Text for At-Risk Readers in the Primary School Program

by

Julia E. Embry

Cluster #41

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Julia Embry
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CS011202

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Carol Buddo

Mrs. Carol Buddo

Principal, Elementary School
Title

Louisville, Kentucky
Address

January 26, 1993

This practicum report was submitted by Julia E. Embry under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Feb. 5, 1993
Date of Final Approval of Report

Wm. W. Anderson
Dr. William Anderson, Adviser

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This practicum is dedicated to the teachers and principal that made this effort possible. Carol Buddo has not only been an outstanding principal for many years but a most trusted friend and mentor to me. Thank you, Carol and enjoy your much deserved retirement.

A special thank you to Dr. William Anderson for his gentle manner and masterful insights into early literacy that guided the process of this practicum.

A very special thank you to my family. I thank God everyday for the love and strength that has blessed my days with three beautiful, happy sons: Randall, Bradley, and Christopher and my tenacious husband, Randy. Each one has given me the persistence and determination to complete this practicum.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

TITLE PAGE.....i

APPROVAL PAGE.....ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....iv

ABSTRACT.....v

Chapter

I INTRODUCTION..... 1

Description of Work Setting and Community.. 1
Writer's Work Setting and Role..... 2

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM..... 3

Problem Description..... 3
Problem Documentation..... 3
Causative Analysis..... 5
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature..6

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS..... 9

Goals and Expectations..... 9
Expected Outcomes..... 9
Measurement of Outcomes..... 11

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY..... 12
Discussion and Evaluation..... 12
Description and Justification for Solution..... 14
Calendar Plan..... 16
Report of Action Taken..... 21
Deviations..... 26
Roadblocks..... 27

V RESULTS,DISCUSSION,AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 29
Results..... 30
Discussion..... 34
Recommendations..... 42
Dissemination..... 43

REFERENCES..... 44

Appendices

A PRACTICUM INTERVIEW..... 49
B RUNNING RECORD..... 51

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1 Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)..30

2 Teacher Interview Results, Question #4.....38

3 Teacher Interview Results, Question #6.....40

ABSTRACT

Staff Development for Selecting Appropriate Text for At-Risk Readers in the Primary School Program. Embry, Julia E., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Assessment/At-Risk Students/Inservice Training/Elementary Teacher Education

The practicum was designed to devise a system of literacy instruction to train teachers to select appropriate text for at-risk students by an authentic assessment of the running record as a starting point for meeting the literacy needs of each individual student. This system was constructed in a staff development inservice which involved a period of fifteen weeks.

The writer developed inservice training sessions on the running record; adminstered pre- and post-questionnaries and Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile to the teachers; administered pre- and post-running records and writing samples of the at-risk students prepared demonstration literacy lessons for the teachers, and assisted teachers in selecting appropriate text for at-risk students.

Anaylsis of the data revealed that after the inservice training on the running record and early literacy sessions, the teachers were able to select appropriate text for the at-risk student. The key factor to the accomplishment of the practicum was the literacy inservice training sessions received by the teachers.

Permission Statement

As a student in the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood, I do (*) do not ( ) give permission to Nova University to distribut copies of this practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

February 9, 1993 (date)

Julia Embry (signature)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The work setting for the writer is a primary after-school program in a large, urban city. The school is located in a city-county system of eighty- eight elementary schools. It is a non-Chapter I, suburban school of eight hundred students, kindergarten through fifth grade, with a full range of instructional services. The school participates in city-county wide busing for desegregation, and it has a black/white ratio of thirty percent black and seventy percent white.

The population involved with the practicum consists of five primary teachers working with three classrooms of eight to fifteen at-risk students in the primary program. The primary, after-school program student's ages range from six to eight years old. The total at-risk student population of the primary, after-school program is

thirty eight. The population is made up of fifty-eight percent male and forty-two percent female. It is twenty-nine percent black and seventy-one percent white.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is a trained Reading Recovery Teacher Leader. The writer has a certification to train teachers in the methods/ procedures of Reading Recovery after completing a year of intense study at the Ohio State University. Reading Recovery, developed by Dr. Marie Clay, of New Zealand, is an early intervention program designed to help first grade children who are having difficulty in learning to read.

The role of the writer in the school district involves training teachers for the Reading Recovery program, assessing literacy needs of at-risk, primary students, and presenting literacy inservices for elementary teachers at the district level. The writer will be training five primary classroom teachers with the latest research and theory in the area of early literacy for the at-risk student.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Teachers select inappropriate text for the at-risk student in the primary school program, resulting in limited progress and frustration on the part of both the student and the teacher.

Problem Documentation

The evidence of this problem is supported by (a.) recommendations by primary teachers who refered at-risk students to the remedial after-school program, (b.) the students work and teacher-made observations, (c.) a teacher inservice training requested by the principal, (d.) teacher interviews, and (e.) DeFord's (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP).

During the fall of 1991, teachers assessed their primary students using standardized reading performance tests. Those students that failed the reading performance test and/or needed extra reading help were recommended by the teacher for the spring remedial after-school program.

The student work had been observed in three primary classrooms since the fall of 1991. At-risk students have been unable to do the dittoes and worksheets that accompany the basal text. When interviewed in January (see Appendix A), the teachers averaged four worksheets a day. The at-risk student's self-esteem has suffered due to the limited progress in reading and writing.

Due to the creation of the primary school program, the principal has requested several teacher inservice training sessions concerning working with the literacy needs of students ranging in ages six, seven, and eight years old during the fall of 1991.

The teachers who were interested in working with the at-risk students during the spring of 1992 were interviewed in January of 1992. These teachers were uncertain on how to select appropriate materials for the at-risk students. Each of these teachers participated in a training session on how to use authentic assesssment

through the use of 'running record' Clay (1985, 1990) to determine appropriate text selection for the at-risk student. The running record is a written record of the student's reading as observed and recorded by the teacher. Clay (1990) stated that these observations give the teacher insights to the student's reading process which enables the teacher to select appropriate text for the at-risk reader.

The principal approved the five teachers in January, 1992, who participated in the spring remedial after-school program. The teachers were given the TORP. The five teachers scored a mean score of seventy-two on the TORP. All five teachers were from a traditional, basal teaching background as indicated by the TORP. Four teacher's scores indicated a skills approach to the teaching of reading. One teacher scored in the phonic approach range of the TORP.

Causative Analysis

It is the writer's belief there are five reasons that cause teachers to select inappropriate text for the at-risk reader. The first cause is the lack of resources that enable the teachers to select appropriate text for at-risk students that help to create shifts in the literacy learning for the student.

The second cause is the use of standardized testing instead of authentic assessment for the teacher to make appropriate instructional decisions for the at-risk student's level of reading and writing.

The third cause is the absence of teacher inservice training that lacks the latest research and theory concerning literacy development over the past five years, especially research with emergent literacy.

The fourth cause that teachers select inappropriate text for the at-risk reader is the approach to the teaching of reading. The teachers are teaching reading at a skill level instead of a strategy level with at-risk readers.

The fifth and last cause is the at-risk student, due to limited progress, does not have the sense of feeling like a reader or writer that enables one to take a risk in the classroom.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Clay (1991), Gourley (1984), and Peterson (1991) all discuss the importance of selecting appropriate text for the at-risk student.

Clay (1991) states:

> Children who are having difficulty understanding a reading task have particular needs for some assistance from the texts they work with, and appropriate sequencing of texts in an individualized program calls for a great deal of understanding by their teachers of gradients of difficulty in the texts used. (p. 201)

Other literature gives evidence to the problems created by difficulties of readability for students on texts. Dreyer (1984) and Hunt (1970) discuss the readability, motivation, and frustration level of some text. Dreyer's research indicates that the key factors to determine if a student will read or not read is based on interest and motivation of the student.

Cox (1970) discusses the criteria for evaluation of reading materials. Cox believes that "to assess reading materials in terms of their potential for fostering growth in the more complex skills of comprehension and application to one's own thinking becomes a more difficult test of the teacher's ability to integrate and synthesize educational objectives"(Cox, 1970, p. 140). Cox's article reflects that if the appropriate selection of reading materials is made by the teachers careful, skillful guidance, it will strengthen the cognitive growth of theirs students.

Clay (1990) and Teale (1988) discuss why standardized test scores only measure outcomes, not the process which contribute to learning. Teale (1988) states, "the assessment procedures sanctioned by states and the majority of school districts for use with young children measure very few factors and pay little attention to the activities being implemented in early childhood literacy programs" (p.177).

The literature reveals several causes when there is not a reading/writing, risk-free environment created by the teacher. Routman (1988)and Butler and Turbill (1987) invite the teachers to experience a reading and writing classroom which they have developed. Sampson, Van Allen, and Sampson (1991), Holdaway (1979, 1982), and McKenzie (1977, 1986) give ideas and activities to create literacy tasks with the primary students.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and expected outcomes were projected for this practicum to devise a system of literacy instruction to train teachers to select appropriate text for at-risk students by using authentic assessment as a starting point for meeting the literacy needs of each individual student.

Expected Outcomes

The five objectives of the practicum are:

1. Four out of five teachers will demonstrate their ability to use the running record to assess the reading strengths of the at-risk students. By the end of the implementation period, the teachers will correctly administer two running records on a student judged by the writer. The running record will be introduced to the teachers as

part of the inservice training on authentic assessments. None of of the teachers have ever been exposed to this form of authentic assessment.

2. By the end of the implementation period, the five teachers will report using no more than an average of three worksheets in their regular teaching day (i.e., a reduction from the current average of four).

3. All five of the teachers will attend a minimum of one hour per week for inservice and preparation of the literacy needs of the at-risk readers with the writer and/or colleagues.

4. Four out of five teachers will be able to select appropriate text for the at-risk readers by demonstrating and discussing with the writer why the text was selected for an individual student in in the after-school program based on the student's individual needs.

5. The five teachers will obtain a mean score of at least ten per-cent above the current mean score of seventy-two on the TORP. The higher mean score on the TORP will indicate a move toward a holistic approach to the reading process instead of a phonic/

skill approach by the end of the implementation period.

Measurement of Outcomes

The procedures for collecting the data on the practicum was through observations and weekly journal writing of the writer, a pre/post interview and a pre/post assessment of the TORP on the four teachers working in the after-school program. A pre/post assess ment on the writing vocabulary and running records will be given to the at-risk students by the writer and four teachers in the after-school program.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation

Teachers select inappropriate text for the at-risk student in the primary school program resulting in limited progress and frustration on the part of both the student and the teacher. The teacher needs to link the appropriate text to the unique literacy characteristics of the student that enable scaffolding as the student progresses as a reader and writer. Evidence gained from the literature states the importance of not only the features of the text as the sole criterion for the selection but the student's prior knowledge, the student's interest level, and the student's needs at different times.

Clay (1991), Peterson (1991), and Gourley (1984), suggest that teachers use the characteristics in the text and have interaction to select appropriate text which can support the reader.

Williams and Silva (1985), Dreyer (1984), Hunt (1970), and Cox (1970) suggest that teachers use the readability and interest of the text to support the reader.

Clay (1990, 1985), Teale (1988), Chittenden and Courtney (1989), Valencia & Pearson (1987), and DeFord, Lyons, and Pinnell (1991) give evidence to teachers on the appropriate use of authentic assessment of primary children. The research of early readers from the authors cited indicate assessment must be on the what the primary student is bringing to the text through experience and expectation at that moment in time not based on past standardized test scores.

Routman (1988), Butler and Turbill (1987), Dewey (1915/1962), Holdaway (1979), Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985), and Sampson, Van Allen,and Sampson (1991) suggest that teachers develop an understanding of the literacy acquisition that all students need to develop to be successful readers and writers. One way of understanding the literacy needs of the primary student is through observation. Research from the authors cited has shown that observation of the student is a powerful tool for assessing the needs of young readers and writers.

Clay (1982), Strickland (1990), McKenzie (1977), Holdaway (1979), Strickland and Morrow (1989), Teale and Sulzby (1986), Cullinan and Strickland (1986), and Sampson (1986) discuss the aspects of the emergent literacy of students in the primary program. Research has shown reading and writing to be a process not an attainment of skills that must be accomplished before the primary student may beome a reader or writer. McKenzie (1977) research demonstrates "the child's early reading experience is gained within the medium of written language, not in pre-reading exercises or reading readiness kits, but while he or she is actually engaged in reading and writing" (p. 320).

Description and Justification for Solution

In devising a system of literacy instruction, the resources are vital component to the teachers for selecting appropriate text. Resources included several copies of trade books, big books, chart paper, reading/writing journals, and other materials for creating a reading/writing environment.

Through the Reading Recovery training, the writer trained the classroom teachers to take the running record (see Appendix B). The value of the running record helped establish a starting point in text selection for the at-risk reader.

The training of the teachers was crucial for the success of the practicum. Through demonstrations of the writer, videos, and visitations of reading/writing classrooms, the teachers observed work with emergent readers.

All teachers were able to observe a Reading Recovery lesson where the teachers are taught how to work on a strategy level instead of a skill level when working with the at-risk readers.

Through the writer's modeling of building on the strengths of the at-risk students, the teachers developed strategies and activities for their at-risk students. This is important that teachers build on the strengths so that the at-risk student has a sense of being a reader and writer.

Calendar Plan

The timeline for the practicum followed:

Week 1: March 16-20, 1992

Teacher training began this week.

Presentation by the writer on the purpose of appropriate text selection for at-risk students.

Teachers read Peterson's article on selecting appropriate text for beginning readers.

Teachers evaluted and discussed the observational record-keeping system for the primary students.

Teachers evaluted and discussed the lesson plans developed by the writer.

Week 2 and 3: March 23-April 3, 1992

Teacher training continued.

Assessment training on Clay's running record and writing vocabulary.

Presentation by the writer linking assessment training with teaching at a strategy level for the at-risk readers and writers.

Big Book inservice for teachers using shared reading and and shared writing in the classroom.

Writer demonstrated a literacy lesson for the teachers.

Writer assisted teachers in developing a management system for the literacy program.

Three teachers were assigned classrooms for after-school program. The writer and other two teachers assisted the three assigned teachers.

Week 4: April 6-10, 1992

Teacher Reflection Week

Each teacher relected and reassessed the needs of their students.

Each teacher scheduled a conference with the writer to discuss their reassessment of the students.

Teachers given two articles to update their training on literacy.

Week 5: April 13-17, 1992

Assessment of students in the primary literacy program.

Teachers gave each student a writing vocabulary assessment to be place in the student's portfolio.

Teachers gave each student several running records to help select appropriate text for a starting point for the at-risk student.

The writer gave assistance and scaffolding to each teacher once a week in their classroom.

Week 6-7: April 20-May 1, 1992

Introduction of the Primary Literacy Program

Instruction for the at-risk students took place every Tuesday and Thursday after-school for eight weeks for 90 minutes.

The first 15 minutes of the program was devoted to the change over from the regular school day to the after-school program.

After the change over, the teacher read aloud to the primary students for 15 minutes.

After the read aloud, the next 45 minutes devoted to the literacy workshop. The literacy workshop included the following activities:

- Shared Reading
- Shared Writing
- Familiar Rereading
- Independent Writing in journal or creation of their own book.

The last 15 minutes was devoted to D.E.A.R. (silent reading) by all the students and the teachers.

The running record was taken once a week to help the teacher with appropriate selection of the text for the student.

The writer monitored the progress of the teachers.

The writer and teachers monitored the progress of the students.

Week 8-12: May 4-June 5, 1992

Expansion of the Primary Literacy Program

After the teacher's reassessment of each student, the teacher tried scaffolding each student's needs based on their observations and record-keeping.

The teacher expanded their read alouds to inclue poetry as a selection of literature.

The teacher expanded the literacy workshop by providing a variety of activities centered around shared reading and writing. Example: Making a story map with the students.

The teacher introduced the reading conferences during the silent reading block.

Retelling of the story and the running record was included during the reading conference.

Self-selection of the text was encouraged the last two weeks of the program.

During the last week of the program for the students, teachers took a final running record and writing vocabulary assessment to compare pre- and post-scores for the student's portfolio.

Week 13-15: June 8-26, 1992

Evaluation of the implementation period

Reflection of the implementation period.

Reflection of the primary literacy program by the principal, the curriculum resource teacher, and teachers involved in the program.

A post interview and TORP of the teacher's training on the assessment used with the students and selection of appropriate text.

Report of Action Taken

During the first three weeks, teacher training was given to four teachers on early literacy instruction for the primary student. The teachers received training with effectiveness on assessment through the running record and writing vocabulary. Other literacy instruction was given in how to select appropriate text for the primary student, record-keeping through observations and lesson plans, and shared reading and shared writing through the use of big books.

During the literacy instruction, the elements of a literacy lesson were discussed. The elements of a literacy lesson consisted of reading aloud every day to the primary student, shared reading, shared writing, independent reading, and independent writing. The training stressed the importance of reading aloud at every meeting to the at-risk students.

A big book training session was offered to the teachers on how to use big books effectively in the primary classroom. The two hour staff development session covered the theory and research of the big book, how to use a big book, and extension activitites through

the use of writing. The teachers were offered six hours of literacy training before the primary literacy program began.

The fourth week of training was dedicated to reading and reflecting the professional materials on early literacy before the beginning of the Primary Literacy Program. Also this week was to be used in preparation for the beginning of receiving the at-risk students the following week.

During the next eight weeks, the Primary Literacy Program began with three classroom teachers, one teacher assistant, and 38 students. The Primary Literacy Program is an after-school remedial program for those students needing extra help with reading and writing. The instruction for the at-risk students took place on Tuesday and Thursday for 90 minutes after the regular school program. The ages of the primary students were from six to nine years old.

On the first day of instruction each teacher gave their individual students a writing vocabulary assessment at the beginning of the program. Each student was given a writing journal for the after-school remedial program. The writer began administering to all the students an individual running record assessment.

The Primary Literacy Program after-school program began with a 15 minute change over from the regular school day to the after-school program. The next 15 to 20 minutes were devoted to reading aloud to the primary students. After a short break, the literacy workshop resumed for the 45 minutes. The literacy workshop included one or more of the following components: shared reading and/or shared writing, independent reading, and independent writing.

The last 15 minutes of the after-school program were devoted to Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) by all the students and the teachers.

During the next eight weeks, the after-school program establised a routine with the teachers and the writer. The writer demonstrated many literacy lessons for the teachers to help empower them with selecting appropriate text for at-risk students. The following examples are the literacy lessons that worked with the at-risk students from the writer's log.

In Teacher #1's classroom, the writer read several books to the students. The students selected Cookie's Week by Cindy Ward (1988)

as their favorite book that day. The writer demonstrated how to do a shared writing on a large chart in front of the class with the children retelling the story of Cookie's Week. The writer made a suggestion to the teacher to follow through with creating a big book from the student's text or let the students make individual books from their own daily school schedule. After a brief snack the students worked individually in their writing journals. Toward the end of the session, the students were given the opportunity to select books to read for substained silent reading.

In Teacher #2's classroom, the teacher begin her session with the students writing in their journals. The teacher started an activity involving a big book on spiders. The teacher completed a shared writing experience on spiders, and then students made individual stories on describing spiders. During snack the writer read to the students. After the writer's reading aloud, the students selected books to read for D.E.A.R.

In the third classroom, Teacher #3 had the students working in their writing journals. The teacher had already shared with the children the big book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle (1969). After the journal writing exercise the writer assisted the students in mak-

ing their own version of the big book. The writer used chart paper during the shared writing experience so the students could experience the creation of the new text. Later, the students reread their story of the very hungry tadpole. After the shared reading, the students had their snack. As the snack concluded, the teacher allowed the students time to select books for their independent reading time.

The last three weeks of the training with the teachers were used to evaluate the students through the running record and writing vocabulary assessment to compare pre-and post-scores for the student's portfolio. A report was given on the student's progress to the parent, principal, and the regular school program teacher. A post-interview and TORP of the teacher's training on the assess- were given.

Deviations

Two deviations occured during the implemention of the Primary Literacy Program. The first was the lost of an teacher assistant. The assistant teacher had a commitment with the classes at the university and was unable to particiate in the time needed to implementment the after-school program. The teacher was dropped from the research aspect of the Literacy Program. The total teachers involved with the Primary Literacy Program Practicum was four. There were three certified teachers and one teacher assistant.

The last four weeks of the Primary Literacy Program were to be used as an expansion of the program. The teachers were to expand the at-risk program in the last four weeks before the end of the implementation. However due to a time factor the regular program continued and the expansion was eliminated. The plans for expansion may be introduced next year when the after-school program is revised. The expansion plans include poetry to be read aloud to the students, retelling of the story plus using the running record as a tool of assessment, and using reading conferences with the students.

Roadblocks

The major roadblock encountered along the way was the lack of time. Time became a major factor when the teachers had so much to do and only 90 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday to do the program. They became frustrated from the announcements that interrupted their instruction time doing the transition between the after-school and regular program.

The only complaints that the teachers had were trying to do the paperwork (lesson plans and written observations) in the 90 minutes and keeping the at-risk, after-school population down to a workable size. Teacher #1 and #2 had fifteen students in the after-school program. Teacher #3 had eight students. A roadblock occured with the teachers over the number of at-risk students. The division of students was determined from the director of the program and the team leaders. A greater benefit would have occurred if the after-school teachers would have had more imput in the selection process and a reduction of the at-risk population for better service to the students.

A minor roadblock became the schedule of the writer. The writer was spread too thin over the three classrooms for classroom demonstrates of literacy lessons as well as training and monitoring of the teacher's progress in selecting appropriate text for the at-risk, after-school population. A concern developed that not enough quality time was given individually to each teacher to assist in their professional growth as an empowered teacher.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers select inappropriate text for the at-risk reader in the primary school program resulting in limited progress and frustration on the part of both the student and the teacher.

The expectation of this practicum was to devise a system of literacy insturction to train teachers to select appropriate text for at-risk students by using authentic assessment as a starting point for meeting the literacy needs of each individual student.

The work setting for the writer was a primary after-school program in a large, urban city. The program operated from an elementary school. The school was located in city-county system of 88 elementary schools. The school participated in city-county wide busing for desegregation, and it had a black/white ratio of thirty percent black and seventy percent white.

Besides the at-risk student population, three primary teachers and one teacher assistant were involved with the practicum working with three classrooms of eight to fifteen at-risk readers in the primary program. The primary, after-school program student's age was from six to ten years old. The total at-risk student population of the primary, after-school program was thirty eight. The population was made up of fifty eight percent male and forty two percent female. It was twenty nine percent black and seventy one percent white.

Results

There were five expected objectives that increased the teacher's ability to select appropriate text for the at-risk student in the after-school program.

The first objective stated that four out of five teachers will demonstrate their ability to use the running record to assess the reading strengths of the at-risk students.

At the end of the implementation period, the four remaining teachers demonstrated their ability to use the running record to assess the reading strengths to the at-risk students. At the end of the implementation period, the teachers successfully administered two running records on a student judged by the writer. The running record was introduced to the teachers as part of the inservice training on authentic assessment. None of the primary teachers had been exposed to this form of authentic assessment.

The second objective stated that by the end of the implementation period, all five teachers would report using no more than an average of three worksheets in their regular teaching day. The teachers were polled before the inservice training were using an average four to five worksheets during their regular teaching day.

The four remaining teachers, the fifth teacher dropped out before the inservice training began, indicated a decrease in worksheets due t to the literacy training. The teachers noted the importance of the demonstration lessons through the post-teacher interviews. The literacy lessons gave them an alternative to the worksheets. Dittoes and worksheets were not allowed in the after-school program with

the at-risk readers for reading and writing lessons. This alternative to worksheets carried over to the regular school program.

The third objective stated that all the teachers will attend a minimum of one hour per week for inservice and preparation of the literacy needs of the at-risk readers with the writer and/or colleagues.

All four of the teachers attended a minimum of one hour per week with the writer and colleagues for staff development and preparation of the literacy needs of the at-risk readers. The staff development sessions increased the teachers awareness of the literacy needs of the at-risk student.

The fourth objective stated that four out of five teachers will be able to select appropriate text for the at-risk reader by demonstrating and discussing with the writer why the text was selected for an individual student in the after-school program based on the student's individual needs.

The four remaining teachers were able to increase their ability to select appropriate text for the at-risk reader by a discussion with the with the writer on the appropriateness of the text through teacher

observation, the running record, and the student's writing journal. This discussion of text for the individual reader in the after-school program based on the student's individual needs was shared with the regular program teacher and the primary student's parents.

The fifth and last objective stated that all the teachers will obtain a mean score of at least ten percent above the current mean schore of seventy-two on the TORP.

Only one teacher showed an increase of ten percent above the mean score. Two teachers increased their mean score but did not meet the stated ten percent gain. The fourth teacher decreased the mean score and the outcome percentage on the TORP. (see Table 1).

Two justifications for the decrease in the fourth teacher's score on the TORP. The first reason was a time factor, the teacher didn't have enough time to validate the new learnings into practice. The second reason was the setting for the post-assessment. The pre-assessment was given in a reflective training session. The post-assessment was given at the end of the day when students were leaving the after-school program.

TABLE 1

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION TO READING PROFILE (T.O.R.P.) RESULTS

	Pre-assessment	Post-assessment
TEACHER #1	107	126
TEACHER #2	87	89
TEACHER #3	97	102
TEACHER #4	101	90

Discussion

During the implementation of the practicum, the literacy training became the key factor for the teachers in their development a successful system for selecting appropriate text for the at-risk reader. The literacy training lessons included literacy demonstration

lessons, videos on literacy practices in the primary classroom, presentations and discussions using the current theories and research of authentic assessment, and appropriate text selection.

The running record became a major tool of diagnotic assessment for the teachers during the literacy training. The running record gave the teachers a base line for instruction with the at-risk readers. The use of the running record demonstrated the ease and assesibility of an authentic assessment instrument so it could be used in the primary classroom. The use of the running record assisted the teacher in looking at each student as an individual.

The running record helped break through many misconvieved ideas that the teachers had made about the reading level of the at-risk student. An example was a seven year old very quiet, reserved girl named Samantha. Samantha was a transfer from another school after winter break. Samantha was a quiet, reserved student who blended in so well with the students that none of the teachers realized she was a non-reader until a running record demonstrated that she was still at an emergent level with her oral reading. In layman terms, Samantha was

in the second grade working at a kindergarten level in reading. Her classroom reading instructional level had been too difficult. She needed easier text for learning to occur.

Another example of the use of the running record occurred when the program told the after-school program teacher that Scott was reading at an emergent level. After the running record was administered, it was discovered that Scott was at a much higher level of instruction that his reading material had been too easy with not enough challenges for this reader. The running record was the tool that helped the teachers move toward a more holistic way of assessment.

The use of authentic reading and writing activities with the students instead of worksheets was adapted as another important instrument with the teachers. The teachers began to value the work of the student's through the daily writing journals. The students showed enjoyment writing and illustrating in their books everyday. The teachers were able to document the student's progress by keeping a portfolio on each student. The use of the journals and portfolios were so useful that the teachers did not miss the dittoes or worksheets. The teachers because of the literacy

training began to value the efforts of the students.

Even though great gains were not evident with the TORP, the post interview reflected that the teacher's perspective had changed in looking at the at-risk reader. In the future the teachers experience and new knowledge will assist in selecting appropiate text for the at-risk student. On Question #4 (see Table 2) of the post interview, all four of the teachers answered that the reading/writing assessment they use in their regular classroom was now through the running record and a portfolio assessment. In the pre interview the teachers only used one way to assess the students, usually through performance or teacher made test.

TABLE 2

TEACHER INTERVIEW RESULTS: QUESTION #4

WHAT TYPE OF READING/WRITING ASSESSMENT DO YOU USE IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

	Pre- assessment	Post-assessment
TEACHER #1	"Reading performance assessment and teacher made tests."	"Moving toward holistic assessment, individual journals."
TEACHER #2	"Occasionally I give tests, mainly using the portfolio idea."	"Reading conference, running record, and writing journals."
TEACHER #3	"Performance tests."	"Teacher observations, running record, now I keep a portfolio on the children's work."
TEACHER #4	"Observations."	"It's a combination, observations, portfolio."

Staff development of the literacy training was the vital component in the practicum. The success of the at-risk readers depended on how the teachers were perceiving them. When the teachers had more understanding of the at-risk student with authentic reading and writing, this new outlook not only helped the student but the teacher. The staff development sessions helped to empower the teacher's decision about appropriate text levels for the students.

On Question #6 (see Table 3), the teachers were asked how to select appropriate text for the at-risk readers. In the pre-assessment one of the teachers had the students read with them until the teacher found something they can read. The teacher was using her best intution with the student, but the teacher and student both deserved better. The teacher needed a tool to help with documentation on the progress of the student. Through the literacy training, the teachers were given two tools: the running record and the portfolio to lend assistance in the progress of the individual student. The post-assessment had the teachers looking at levels of instruction, reading conferences,

and exposure to different types of text for the students.

TABLE 3

TEACHER INTERVIEW RESULTS: QUESTION #6

HOW DO YOU SELECT APPROPRIATE TEST FOR YOUR AT-RISK STUDENTS?

	Pre-assessment	Post-assessment
TEACHER #1	"Read with them until I find something they can read."	"Find a comfortable level of instruction."
TEACHER #2	"Have a conference with the basal."	"Reading conferences to look at the level, expose students to all types of text."
TEACHER #3	"Lots of repetition of words."	"Reading conferences, observing the students, little books."
TEACHER #4	"Individual observations."	"Assessment by ability grouping at a particular time."

The scores on the Theoretical Orientation to Reading (TORP) were not achieved. All four teachers through the pre-assessment scored in the skills range of the reading orientation. In the post - assessment, three of the four teachers were still in the skills range and only one had moved toward a whole language orientation to reading. In post reflection three out of four teachers did make gains on the total score (see Table 1) but not the ten percent margin needed to accomplish the fifth outcome.

The literacy training had been for a few weeks, whereas the teaching and experience of the total years of the teachers had over sixty years. Since the training was undoing a lot of old beliefs about the teaching of reading and writing, there was substantial resistance to change.

The greater benefits of the practicum were not only to the four teachers but to the students who participated in the after-school program. Several of the students wrote in the journal about the fun they were having. They were having fun in learning to read and write. All of the students that were in the after-school

program improved their writing vocabulary and increased or remained the same with the running record. When the pre- and post-assessments were measured by the writer and teachers, not one student's score decreased. The after-school program teachers were able to discuss the progress of each student and later make recommendations for the at-risk student. Some regular teachers discovered that their students were labeled incorrectly, and they were not at-risk at all.

Recommendations

Two recommendations resulted from the practicum. The first is an extension of the literacy training. Six hours of training was a start, but as the TORP indicated, it takes new knowledge/understanding to replace the old theories of learning. Many teachers have years and years of doing what they think is right for the student, however it has put an obstacle in the way of at-risk students. Teachers have worked too long from a basal manual instead of working at the instructional level of the individual student.

The second recommendation deals with the time factor of the after-school program. A 90 minute program two days a week rushed the students and frustrated the teachers. Smaller groups would help the teacher feel as if she had more time with the individual students. An additional day would help the teachers feel more in control. Another option would be to program two blocks of time. This would include down time for the teachers and students making the transition from the regular program to the after-school program.

Dissemination

The dissemination of the practicum began with the principal. The principal was kept abreast of the pre- and post- assessment interviews and TORP. The after-school program teachers shared information concerning the progress of their students with the director of the program, the regular teacher, and the parents.

Parts of this practicum have been shared with other teachers in seven states as part of the writer's workshop with the Bill Martin Literacy Conferences.

References

Anderson, R., Hiebert, E., Scott, J., & Wilkinson, I. (1985). Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading. Washington, DC: The National Institute of Education.

Bulter, A. & Turbill, J. (1987). Towards a reading-writing classroom. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Carle, E. (1969). The Very Hungry Caterpillar. New York: Putman.

Chittendon, E. & Courtney, R. (1989). Assessment of young children's reading: Documentation as an alternative to testin In D. S. Strickland & L. M. Morrow (Eds.) Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Clay, M. M. (1975). What did I write?: Beginning writing behavior. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (1982). Observing young readers. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (1985). The early detection of reading difficulties. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (1990). Research currents: What is and what might be in evaluation. Language Arts, 67, 288-298.

Clay, M. M. (1991). Becoming literate: The construction of inner control. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cox, D. (1970). Criteria for evaluation of reading materials. The Reading Teacher, 24, 140-145.

Cullinan, B. & Strickland, D. (1986). The early years: Language, literature, and literacy in classroom research. The Reading Teacher, 39, 798-806.

DeFord, D. E. (1985). Validating the construct of theoretical orientation in reading instruction. Reading Research Quarterly, 20, 351-367.

DeFord, D. E., Lyons, C., & Pinnell, G. S., (Eds.) (1991). Bridges to literacy: Learning from reading recovery. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Department of Education Wellington. (1985). Reading in junior classes. Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer.

Dewey, J., & Dewey, E. (1915/1962). Schools of tommorrow. New York: Dutton.

Dreyer, L. G. (1984). Readability and responsibility. Journal of Reading, 27, 334-338.

Fuhler, C. (1990). Let's move toward literature-based reading instruction. The Reading Teacher, 43, 312-315.

Gourley, J. (1984). Discourse structure: Expectations of beginning readers and readability of text. Journal of Reading Behavior, 26, 169-188.

Hiebert, E. & Colt, J. (1989). Patterns of literature-based reading instruction. The Reading Teacher, 43, 14-20.

Holdaway, D. (1979). The foundations of literacy. New York: Ashton Scholastic.

Holdaway, D. (1982). Shared book experience: Teaching reading using favorite books. Theory Into Practice, 21, 294-300.

Huck, C., Hepler, S., & Hickman, J. (1987). Children's literature in the elementary school. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Hunt, L. (1970). The effect of self-selection, interest, and motiva tion upon independent, instructional, and frustration levels. The Reading Teacher, 24, 146-158.

McKenzie, M. (1977). The beginning of literacy. Theory Into Practice, 16, 315-324.

McKenzie, M. (1986). Journey into literacy. England: Schofield & Sims Ldt.

Peterson, B. (1991). Selecting books for beginning readers. Bridges to literacy: Learning from reading recovery. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, R. (1988). Transitions: From literature to literacy. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sampson, M. R. (1986). The pursuit of literacy: Early reading and writing. Dubque, IA: Kendall and Hunt.

Sampson, M. R., Van Allen, R. & Sampson, M. B. (1991). Pathways to literacy. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Strickland, D. S. & Morrow, L. M. (Eds.) (1989). Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Strickland, D. S. (1990). Emergent literacy: How young children learn to read. Educational Leadership, 47 (6), 18-23.

Teale, W. & Sulzby, E. (Eds.) (1986). Emergent literacy: Writing an reading. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Teale, W. H. (1988). Developmentally appropriate assessment of reading and writing in the early childhood classroom. The Elementary School Journal, 89, 173-183.

Teale, W. & Sulzby, E. (1989). Emergent literacy: New perspectives. In D. S. Strickland & L. M. Morrow (Eds.). Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Tunnell, M. & Jacobs, J. (1989). Using 'real' books: Research findings on literature-based reading instruction. The Reading Teacher, 42 , 470-477.

Valencia, S. & Pearson, D. (1987). Reading assessment: Time for a change. The Reading Teacher, 40, 726-733.

Ward, C. (1988). Cookie's Week. New York: Scholastic, Inc.

Wildsmith, B. (1982). Cat on the Mat. Oxford: Oxford University F

Williams, S. & Silva, P. (1985). Some factors associated with reading ability: A longitudinal study. Educational Research, 2 159-168.

APPENDIX A

PRACTICUM INTERVIEW

TEACHER INTERVIEW FOR NOVA PRACTICUM (pre and post assessment):

1. What is your approach/method of teaching reading?

2. What is your approach/method of teaching writing?

3. Describe your classroom environment regarding reading and writing?

4. What type of reading/writing assessment do you use in your classroom?

5. What is emergent literacy?

6. How do you select appropriate text for your at-risk students?

7. What professional conferences or inservices have you attended the past year?

8. What professional literature have you read in the past year regarding reading and writing?

9. What are the children's books you like to read aloud to your class?

10. What are your favorite children's authors?

11. Number of dittoes/worksheets you use daily with your students?

12. What is your educational background?

J. Embry '92

APPENDIX B

RUNNING RECORD

RUNNING RECORD

Student's name: Scott Morris Teacher's name: J. Embry

Title & Book Level: Cat on the Mat (2) Accurarcy Rate: 94% SC Rate: 1:2

Sample of a running record:

Text	Running Record
The cat sat on the mat.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ rug sc mat
The dog sat on the mat.	✓ puppy ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ dog
The goat sat on the mat.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
The cow sat on the mat.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
The elephant sat on the mat.	✓ ✓ sits sc ✓ ✓ ✓ sat
Ssspppstt!	✓
The cat sat on the mat.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ a ✓ the

Calculation of the running record:
Total of words in the text: 37 words
Total errors: 2
Total self-corrections: 2
ERROR RATE:
37÷2=18 Ratio 1:18= 94%
SELF-CORRECTION RATE:
2 + 2 = 4 4÷2= 1: 2